

GIRL'S DEATH LEAVES KIN IN STUNNED GRIEF

Ridulphs Hear Prayers for Them in Church

BY NANCY MCGILL

The tragic end to the search for Maria Ridulph, 7, whose body was found Saturday after she had been missing nearly five months, left her parents, Michael and Frances Ridulph, quietly stunned yesterday.

Tired and spent with grief, they remained in seclusion in their neat, white frame home in Sycamore, De Kalb county, after an overnight trip to Galena, Jo Daviess county, where the mother identified her daughter's clothing.

Family Attends Church

The Ridulph family attended church services at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. John, where they heard the congregation pray that they would receive spiritual guidance to carry them thru their sorrow.

Funeral services for Maria will be held at 2 p. m. Wednesday in the church, where she had had perfect attendance in Sunday school classes for three years. Burial will be in the Elmwood cemetery, about three blocks from her home.

Remove Maria's Toys

The home lacked one of its elements yesterday—Maria's corner. It was a section in the living room where the youngster had played and kept her small belongings.

"We took them away this morning," said her sister, Kay, 15. "There were many little things—her perfect tests from school and the toys she played with."

There were no words of hate from the family. They said they just want to see Maria's abductor brought to justice.

The Rev. Louis I. Going, pastor of St. John, praised members of the family for their courage during the nearly five months of uncertainty. He said they would need a new supply of spiritual strength to meet the coming ordeal.

"End of Long Road"

The town's residents were defeated physically and mentally. These were the people who had rallied together—men, women, and children to search for Maria.

On bitterly cold nights they had combed the community and surrounding areas in search of clues. This spring they again joined forces to

pump water out of nearby gravel pits.

"Now we've come to the end of a long road and there's nothing more we can do," said Albert Wolfenberger, who organized the searching party.

The thoughts of Harold Johnson, mayor of Sycamore, turned to Maria's slayer. "In some way it's a relief that her body has been found," he said. "But now we must get the killer."